Improving Road Infrastructure

2682. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that roads carry 61 per cent of the freight and 85 per cent of the passenger traffic and there is a great mismatch in the availability and usage of the road network as 35 per cent of roads are single lane, poorly surfaced and heavily congested; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve the infrastructure by having greater focus on the roads?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) Out of the total freight and passenger traffic carried by railways and roads, the roads carry 61 percent of freight and 85 percent of the passenger traffic. As per available data as on March 2002, out of the total road length in the country 35.6% was of single lane standard (excluding the roads constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana) and 52.6% was unsurfaced.

(b) This Ministry is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of the National Highways. The State Government concerned is responsible for roads other than National Highways. The Union Government has taken up several initiatives for improvement of National Highways including four laning, six laning and construction of expressways etc., under the various phases of National Highways Development Project (NHDP), Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in the North East Region (SARDP-NE). Apart from this, the National Highways are improved under the Annual Programme of the Ministry as per the traffic, *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

Inland Waterways Transportation in Orissa

2683. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR.

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop Inland Waterways Transportation (IWT) for ferrying cargo through perennial rivers;